

The Open Mike^{District 2}

A Newsletter From Councilman **Mike Knapp**

Volume 3, Number 3

May 2007

A Moment at the Mike

Lending a Hand with Spring Cleaning

The warm weather finally arrived in mid-April, about four weeks later than we like to get it, and probably a few months later than most of us preferred. While our winter was relatively mild this year, the few weeks of cold weather we did get were enough to make even the biggest fans of winter long for spring.

Now that it's here, take a look around. Between the budding trees and blooming flowers, chances are good you're also seeing trash that's been blowing around since last autumn, wedged against fences, strewn along the side of the road, or caught in the branches of trees. On April 21, I worked with a number of schools and Scouts in the Upcounty to clean up alongside a couple of the state highways that wind through our region, and I've seen walkers, joggers, and bikers picking up trash as they walked, jogged or biked along paths and roads. I appreciate it, as do your neighbors. Maryland State Highways Administration and the Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation will be cleaning up along our roads as the season progresses, but your help is always welcomed and appreciated; just be careful of traffic and broken glass.



Councilmember Knapp

It's likely you've also got work to do both in and around your own house or apartment, and as you work through your Spring Cleaning, you'll probably have lots of . . . well, *stuff* you need to dispose of. The county provides or supports a variety of services and programs for recycling and disposing of trash, bulk metal, construction or yard waste. With this in mind, then, this installment of *The Open Mike* leans a bit on the "green" side, with information on green schools, community cleanups, and plenty of links to county sites that can help you and your neighbors with your spring cleaning. (The article begins on page 8.)

And if there's anything else I can do to help, [send me a message](#) or give me a call at (240) 777-7955. It's my pleasure to serve.

Regards,

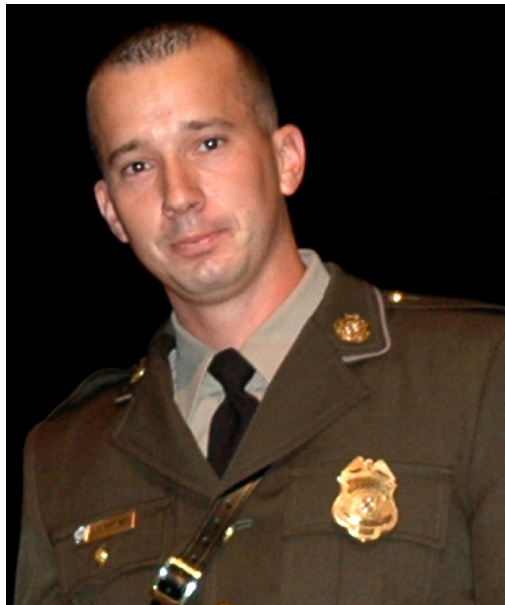
Mike Knapp
Councilmember, District 2

A Moment of Respectful Silence...

I want to send my condolences to the families and friends of the police officers involved in the fatal encounter on April 26. As a member of the Public Safety committee -- but more importantly, as a citizen of this county -- I appreciate the hard work and commitment of police officers. They put their lives on the line every day to keep all of us safe, and the loss of even one officer diminishes us all. We're that much safer and better for having had Officer Luke Hoffman serve our community, and I honor his life and service.

County Mourns Death of Police Officer

Officer Luke T. Hoffman Died of Injuries Sustained in Line of Duty



**Montgomery County Police Officer
Luke Hoffman**

Montgomery County Police Officer Luke T. Hoffman, 24, died at 1:30 a.m. on the morning of April 26, from injuries he sustained as he pursued a man suspected of driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol. A police cruiser driven by a second officer hit Hoffman as he ran after the suspect.

At approximately 1:29 a.m. April 25, Fourth District officers responded to a call regarding a suspected impaired driver, police reported. The driver pulled his vehicle into the parking lot of an apartment complex, then got out of the vehicle and began to run, police said. Hoffman got out of his police car and ran after the driver, who was heading along a wooded area toward Old Georgia Avenue.

As Hoffman reached the side of the roadway near Montpelier Road, he was struck by the police cruiser responding to provide back-up. The cruiser went down an embankment and struck a tree. Police said both officers were flown to the University of Maryland R. Adams Cowley Shock Trauma

Center in Baltimore. The other officer has been released.

Hoffman was hired by the police department in January 2006 and graduated at the top of his class last July. He received the top academic award and the Harry Hamilton Traffic Award for his class. He was initially assigned to the midnight shift in the police department's Sixth District in Gaithersburg and was transferred in December to the Fourth District, where he also worked a midnight shift.

Hoffman was a graduate of McDaniel College and was trained as a firefighter and an emergency medical technician. Montgomery County Police spokesman Lt. Eric Burnett said Hoffman was originally from Howard County and had moved to Germantown a few months ago.

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Damascus Teacher Named MCPS Teacher of the Year

Auto Technology Instructor Raul Javier Ortiz Drives Student Success

Raul Javier Ortiz, an auto technology instructor at [Damascus High School](#), was named Montgomery County Public Schools Teacher of the Year at the April 26 Champions for Children gala.

Ortiz spent the first 20 years of his career tuning car engines. Now, he's shifted gears and heads the successful Automotive Technology Program at Damascus.

Ortiz teaches more than auto technology skills. He also serves as a role model for what his students can achieve. He inspires his students to continue learning, both by sharing his personal story and by providing guidance and support.



Raul Javier Ortiz of Damascus High School was named the MCPS Teacher of the Year.

"Mr. Ortiz is a very special teacher," says Robert Domergue, principal of Damascus HS. "He builds student confidence and skills while building relationships. His students admire and respect him and know that he cares about them."

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Officer

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In a statement released by county police, Chief J. Thomas Manger said the entire department would be mourning the loss of Hoffman.

"The men and women of the Montgomery County Police Department are grieving the loss of a wonderful person and a great cop," he said in the statement. "We have been overwhelmed by the support from the community. The parents of Officer Hoffman want everyone to know how proud they are of their son. They said that Luke is their hero."

Hoffman was laid to rest on April 28 in Woodstock, Maryland.

Never Forget...

15 County Officers Have Been Killed In the Line of Duty Since 1928

Honor their memory. Read their stories:

<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/poltml.asp?url=/content/pol/about/honor.asp>

Teacher

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During his work in the auto industry as a technician, Ortiz served as a mentor to student interns. Realizing that the best way to help people was to teach, he earned 21 credits to receive his teaching certificate and passed all the required national certification tests to achieve his Master Tech Certification. To top that off, he acquired 36 credit hours for his master's degree equivalency. Many of Ortiz's students are inspired to continue their educational careers because of his personal story and his guidance.

Since coming to Damascus in 2002, Ortiz has guided the school through the rigorous processes for both the National Automotive Technician's Education Foundation and the Automotive Youth Educational System certifications—the highest level of credentials for an automotive technology program.

"Our son looks up to Mr. Ortiz and speaks of him daily. He is both a role model and mentor."

**-- Michael Byrne,
DHS Parent**

He has built partnerships with local dealers and repair shops and places students with employers. He shares information about trade schools and college programs with his students, and frequently brings school and industry representatives to talk to them.

Knowing that a well-rounded education is essential in any career, Ortiz emphasizes writing, reading, verbal communication, information technology and math skills as he works with students in his shop.

Grateful parents recognize Ortiz's impact on their children. They speak of his classroom skills, high expectations and ability to encourage students to take responsibility and problem-solve for themselves. "Our son looks up to Mr. Ortiz and speaks of him daily," says parent Michael Byrne. "He is both a role model and mentor to my son, so much so that my son has chosen auto mechanics as a vocation and will be attending NTI in the Carolinas next fall."

In 2006, Ortiz received the Career and Technology Education Teacher Award of Excellence in the Transportation, Distribution and Logistics Career cluster. He also was featured on Fox News in November 2005 as "One Who Makes a Difference."

Ortiz will compete with teachers from other counties for [Maryland Teacher of the Year](#). That winner will advance to the national competition.

The Teacher of the Year was selected from among three veteran teacher winners of the Marian Greenblatt Excellence in Teaching Awards. The other two veteran teacher award winners were Philip D'Agnese of [Spark M. Matsunaga Elementary School](#), and Noreen Gale of [Oakland Terrace Elementary School](#).

Information courtesy of [Montgomery County Public Schools](#).

**Councilmember Mike Knapp
100 Maryland Avenue, 6th Floor
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Governor Visits Maryland's First "Green School"

Great Seneca Creek Elementary Achieves National Environmental Certification



Governor Martin O'Malley, Great Seneca Creek Assistant Principal Donna Segona, County Executive Ike Leggett, Delegate Charles Barkley, State Comptroller Peter Franchot, Councilmember Knapp and Delegate William Bronrott respond to student questions during a visit to Great Seneca Creek Elementary School. The school is constructed of materials that have a minimal impact on the environment.

On April 11, 2007, I was thrilled to join Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley and other State and local officials on a tour of [Great Seneca Creek Elementary School](#)—Maryland's first "green" school.

During the tour, O'Malley discussed the historic funding for public education and school construction approved during this year's legislative session, and touted new legislation to expand "green buildings" in the State of Maryland. The state will provide \$52 million for Montgomery County Schools, including \$6.3 million for Great Seneca Creek Elementary School in the FY08 budget.

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Olney Volunteers Lead Community Clean Up

As part of the extended Earth Day activities, the Olney Mill Community Association (OMCA) held its 4th Annual Community Clean-Up Day on March 24, 2007. Despite drizzly weather, volunteers made their way around the Olney area for three hours, picking up trash in parks and along the roads.



Leading the effort to clean the Olney Family Park were Ginger Twombly and Dean Kimmel, who led 25 volunteers from the park's entrance, around the softball fields, and even to the very bottom of the Duck Pond, where volunteer Mark Shreib, using his own canoe, removed mounds of cans and plastic bags from the pond. Mill House Clean Up was coordinated by Jack Wall, in conjunction with Maryland Lehmann. Working together, these two OMCA members cleaned up the Mill House grounds and down the Olney-Laytonsville Service Road to Brooke Meadow Lane. Dennis Twombly organized cleanup at the Charline Manor Park, leading volunteers through the park, the vacant lot on Mt. Olney Lane, and along Brookeville Road. Cindy King led the effort to clean up bottles and cans along Grayheaven Manor and Brookeville Road, while the Jacobson family cleaned up the treacherous stretch along Brookeville Road

from Georgia Avenue to Oakley Cabin.

Wesley Harris, working on his Eagle Scout community project, organized 32 scouts, family members, and friends to clean the woodlands and trails in Reddy Branch Park. Starting at Grayheaven Manor, the group worked along Belmont, Islander and Longwood, clearing trails, collecting trash, and removing debris and downed branches. Anyone who uses the trails in

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Green School

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Great Seneca Creek Elementary School, located in Germantown, is a [Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design \(LEED\) Certified](#) "Silver" school. Constructed from materials that minimally impact the environment, and built with a number of energy-saving features like motion-activated sinks, a geo-thermal heating/cooling system, and fiberglass window frames, Great Seneca Creek Elementary School has a significantly smaller environmental footprint than a comparable non-green school. At the same time, the lower energy and water usage are expected to more than offset the small increase in initial construction costs.

Great Seneca Creek Elementary School also offers its students and teachers the latest in educational technology. With wireless networks, Tablet PCs, digital projectors, and interactive technology for all students to use, Great Seneca Creek Elementary is a model for smart investments in early education.

Following the tour of the school, we visited with kindergarten students working on environmental projects. All in all, it was a most informative--and entertaining--morning, and I'm delighted with all that Great Seneca Creek has accomplished.

And another tip of the hat...***Upcounty Schools, Scouts Scour Roads and Highways for Earth Day***

On Saturday, April 21, I was very proud to work with students, scouts, parents, and teachers on an effort to clean up trash alongside a number of county roads and state highways that cross the Upcounty region. Starting at 9 a.m. on what proved to be a beautiful morning, we spent the next two--and in some cases three or four--hours scouring the roads in the Germantown-Gaithersburg region. With the generous assistance of the Maryland State Highways Administration, which provided us with trash bags and parked its trash trucks in a number of school lots for easy disposal, we were able to get rid of a surprising number of heavy, sagging garbage bags.

While it seems it never takes long for our roads to become cluttered again, anyone driving along some of the major roads in the region is certain to notice the difference. I hope readers of *The Open Mike* will join me in thanking the following schools and organizations--and their kids--for helping to pull off this enormous task:

- **Roberto Clemente Middle School (*Shawn Joseph, Principal*)**
- **Martin Luther King Middle School (*Marc Cohen, Principal*)**
- **Kingsview Middle School (*Dennis Queen, Principal*)**
- **National Capital Area Council-Boy Scouts of America (*Richard Branscome, Gary Carroll, and Belinda Radko, Scout Leaders*)**
- **Neelsville Middle School (*Dollye McClain, Principal*)**
- **Northwest High School (*Sylvia Morrison, Principal*)**
- **Seneca Valley High School (*Suzanne Maxey, Principal*)**

I'm also grateful to John Lohmeyer at MSHA for his assistance. Hopefully, we were all able to brighten your drive just a little bit. We even had fun doing it.

Olney

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Reddy Branch Park can thank Wesley and his crew for their hard work in making the area cleaner and safer.

"We are thrilled that this event was so successful," reported OMCA residents in *The Mill Stream*. "Not only did we clean up wide areas in and around Olney Mill, but we were able to teach the importance of environmental awareness to our children."

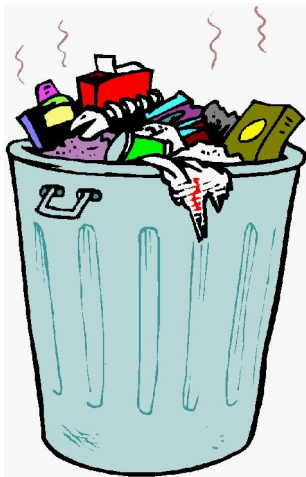
If you enjoy these areas or are driving through Olney thinking how nice everything looks, you can thank these residents—your Upcounty neighbors—for their time and effort. However, cleanup of these areas needs to be more than a once-a-year event. Volunteers routinely pick up litter in the parks and on the trails in the Olney area. If you're interested in lending a hand, please contact the Olney Mill Community Association at (301) 231-3739.

Information courtesy of The Mill Stream, published by the Olney Mill Community Association, Inc. For more information, visit www.olneymill.org.

Information, Please!

Your Guide to County Trash and Recycling Services

Montgomery County provides a wide array of services to help residents dispose of trash and other debris, mostly through the County's [Division of Solid Waste Services](#). Our county also takes recycling seriously, providing government-supported services throughout much of the county. The degree and extent of these services changes from time to time, so it's often worth while to take a look at what services are available. Even those among us who have lived in the county for a long time sometimes need some help remembering what needs to be done to get rid of bulk trash, old paint cans, or that rusty swingset. Here's a little something, then, to prompt your memory.



Trash Pickup

While there are areas in our region where the county is responsible for curbside garbage pick up, for most of us in the Upcounty region, trash pickup is provided by private trash collection companies. Look them up in the yellow pages or on the internet under "Rubbish and garbage removal." Keep in mind that contractors cannot charge you for the costs of trash disposal – you already pay for that through your property taxes. In most cases, you're paying for collection.

Your trash will be picked up once a week. **If you're not sure what day that might be, [click here](#).** If there's a holiday during the week, things start to get interesting. If the holiday falls on any weekday, then service following that holiday "slides over" one day. Clear as mud, right? [Click here for more information](#).

Bulk Trash: Home Repair Debris

If you can fit it into a trash can, you can put out up to two cans of home repair debris. That's the stuff like dry wall, wood scraps, flooring material, tile, and other material that can end up in a big junk pile. If you can fill two cans, and make sure each one weighs less than 45 pounds, you can put it out with your regular curbside trash collection.

Scrap Metal Disposal

However, sometimes you've got bigger items you need to dispose of – things like refrigerators, old stoves, maybe a metal swingset. No problem. If you can get it to the curb, the county will take it away, provided you call in advance to schedule a pickup at (240) 777-6410, or [complete an on-line request by clicking here](#).

"Beauty Spots"

Still, there are some things that can't be picked up -- like fencing, wood, old televisions, or mattresses. You can bring these kinds of items to one of the so-called "beauty spots" in the Upcounty, in Poolesville or Damascus, or to the Shady Grove Solid Waste Transfer Station.

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Trash

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[Click here](#) for information on the Damascus Beauty Spot, and [here](#) for information of the Poolesville Beauty Spot. For details on the Shady Grove Transfer Station, [click here](#).

Recycling

Montgomery County has been recycling for years – in fact, it's the law. It's good for environment, and what's more, it's easy to do: just put your recyclables in a county-provided blue recycling container -- one for paper, one for cans -- and haul it to the curb. If you live in an apartment or condo, chances are good there's a place in your community where you can drop off recyclable materials. Check with your property manager for more information.

To find out what day recycling pickup is scheduled in your community, [click here](#).

Ordering blue recycling bins

From time to time, those blue bins either disappear or, to your frustration, end up getting hit by traffic. If that happens, simply **complete the on-line request for a new bin** by [clicking here](#).



Recycling Yard Waste

Yard waste—that's things like leaves and twigs—can also be taken away on recycling day. While the county encourages "[grasscycling](#)"—the use of your clippings as mulch—you can also place clippings and other yard debris in the yard bags you can buy in most stores, or in a regular trash can marked with a large "Yard Waste" sticker. If you want to use a trash can, stickers are available free of charge from the county.

You can also try composting. The county now makes bins available free of charge at several locations throughout the county. **For more information,** [click here](#).

Graffiti Removal

If you spot graffiti anywhere in Montgomery County, contact Graffiti Abatement Partners (GRAB) at (301) 607-4722 to report it. And while you're at it, call and volunteer.

Still need more information?

Montgomery County Division of Solid Waste Services
(240) 777- 6410

Visit their website at:

<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/swstmpl.asp?url=/content/dpwt/solidwaste/index.asp>

Council Must Manage Budget Demands, Expectations

On March 13, 2007, the County Executive provided the Council his recommended \$4.1 billion County operating budget for FY2008. The County Executive's proposed budget increases FY2007 spending by \$259 million—or 6.7 percent. It is now the Council's responsibility to review the Executive's recommendations as well as those of all our county agencies to ensure that the budget funds the County's priority programs while staying within the charter limit.



As residents of Montgomery County, we understand that there is a cost associated with funding priority programs such as education, public safety, transportation, and services to our neediest residents in order to ensure the quality of life that we have all come to enjoy and expect in the County. My objective is to be sure that your tax dollars are being used responsibly in order to provide those programs and services in the most effective and efficient way possible.

While making our way through the budget process, I will be working diligently to make certain that the budget is “moral” and focuses on the long-term picture. This requires ensuring funds and resources for the programs and services we want to provide in FY2008, and also in the years to come. Funding the County's essential—or critical—programs, some of which we are required to fund by law, means that we will not be able to provide funding increases to all government programs and services. Therefore, we must set priorities for the programs and services that are important to the County and its residents. As a result of legislation that I introduced and the Council unanimously approved, the Council and all county government agencies are now required to set these priorities and performance measures for their programs. This allows us to measure a program's results and guarantee that your money is being used appropriately. We will be sure to look at these results meticulously to make sure that all County programs are delivering the best possible services to all residents as we work on the budget.

I will continue to work hard to create a budget that is both responsible and reflects the priorities of the residents of Montgomery County—a budget that remains within the charter limit and provides the necessary funds for programs and services that are essential to this County. Your comments are an invaluable resource for me during the budget process, and I will be sure to take them into consideration as we work towards finalizing the FY2008 budget.

It's still not too late to send in your thoughts or comments. Please feel free to send me an e-mail at Councilmember.Knapp@montgomerycountymd.gov, and let me know what you would like to see funded in the FY2008 Budget. I look forward to hearing from you.



Councilmember Mike Knapp

100 Maryland Avenue, 6th Floor
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[\[Click here for a map.\]](#)

(240) 777-7955

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Chairman's Corner

Education Committee Continues Budget Discussions



The Education Committee is continuing its close scrutiny of the FY2008 Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) and Montgomery College budget, and we have had a number of very good worksessions with officials from MCPS. The committee will complete its work this week, and forward the budget to the full Council for consideration.

The Montgomery College request includes additional positions for full-time faculty members to keep up with enrollment growth, as well as new positions to support the opening of new buildings on several campuses. The committee will also be looking at Montgomery College's space needs, to accommodate the enrollment growth. This is an issue we expect to look at throughout the year.

The MCPS budget recommendation submitted to the Council by the County Executive calls for an increase of \$117 million over last year's spending level, while the budget proposed by the Superintendent asks for an increase of \$137 million. I'm receiving countless calls and e-mails asking the council to "close the gap" or "fully fund" education by agreeing to the higher budget proposal. I appreciate the input. As the Chairman of the Council's Education Committee, I'm not yet ready to agree upon any final level of spending until we have a clearer idea of what it is we're getting for your money to provide the best education for our students.

Because I believe it's important to look not only at how much we spend, but how we spend it, I asked the Office of Legislative Oversight to identify some key fiscal indicators that we might use to determine the effectiveness of the programs in which we invest at MCPS. The Education Committee and the full council are committed to looking very closely, for example, at program effectiveness, best practices, and student achievement, then determining the level of investment necessary to ensure we're receiving the highest quality education for your money.

Whatever the final funding level is, I want to make certain we know exactly what we're getting for your money. The Education Committee is committed to a thorough exploration of the education budget and programs to ensure that we are providing the resources necessary for the strongest possible school system for our children.

Finally, the Education Committee understands that a budget should be reviewed regularly, and not just during "budget season." For this reason, the committee treats review of the budget as a year-round process, and will continue to discuss the budget throughout the coming year.

Education Committee Schedule

The information is subject to change, so please check the Council's website as dates near for updated information. Unless otherwise indicated, all committee meetings will convene in the 7th Floor hearing room of the Council Office Building.

DATE	TIME	MATTERS UNDER CONSIDERATION
May 2	2:00 p.m.	<u>FY2008 Capital and Operating Budgets:</u> - CIP Amendments: MCPS
May 3	2:00 p.m.	<u>FY2008 Capital and Operating Budgets:</u>
May 4	9:30 a.m.	<u>FY2008 Capital and Operating Budgets:</u> MCPS

Drop In and Shred Dept.

Olney Skate Park Celebrates Grand Opening

On Saturday, April 14, I was delighted to join many of my colleagues, the Montgomery County Department of Parks, the Montgomery County Recreation Department and dozens of skateboard enthusiasts for the official grand opening celebration of the new Olney Manor Skate Park.

And what a park it is! The Olney Manor Skate Park is a 14,000-square-foot park, which features a 10' concrete bowl. The park also features a concrete street course made up of quarter pipes, a hubba ledge, a pyramid, stairs, rails and a fun box. As Recreation Department Director Gabriel Albornoz said, "This is a wonderful, state-of-the art facility for this community. The Recreation Department looks forward to providing the youth of Montgomery County another great recreational opportunity for many years to come."



Also attending the event were the County Executive, Council President Marilyn J. Praisner, Montgomery County Delegate Herman Taylor, Senator Rona Kramer, Montgomery County Planning Board Member and Commissioner Meredith Wellington and Friends of Olney Skate Park (FOOS) Founder Jimena Ryan.

FOOS was founded in 2001 shortly after Josh Foster, then a student at Sherwood High School, approached the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) with a petition for a park for the county's young people, specifically skateboard riders. FOOS subsequently raised \$50,000 in private donations from the Carl Freeman Foundation, Carl Freeman Retail, Giant Food, Winchester Homes, Sandy Spring Bank and Ruppert Nurseries to contribute to the cost of constructing the park. A skateboard shaped plaque was unveiled Saturday as part of the celebration in recognition of these donors contributions.

Saturday's event also featured skateboard rider demonstrations by Jesse Davis, Joey Jett, Derek Krasauskas and Rob Nelson. Attitude Skate Shop was on hand with skateboard equipment and gear and the Parks and Recreation departments handed out numerous giveaways, including skateboard shaped key chains and posters.

The skate park is located at the Olney Manor Recreational Park at 16601 Georgia Avenue in Olney.

Information courtesy of Montgomery County Department of Parks, (301) 650-2866

Step Up To *The Open Mike* -- Subscribe!

The Open Mike is an electronic newsletter published monthly by Montgomery County Councilmember Michael J. Knapp (District 2). If you would like to be added to the electronic distribution list, please subscribe by registering at:

<https://ext01.montgomerycountymd.gov/entp/s1p/esubpublic/newssubscriber.do>

and be sure to indicate you'd like to subscribe to information on **District 2**.

Counseling Services Available For Crime Victims

In the wake of the recent tragic events at Virginia Tech, county officials remind Montgomery County residents that counseling services for crime victims are available through the Victim Assistance and Sexual Assault Program (VASAP), part of the County's Department of Health and Human Services.

VASAP services include 24-hour telephone and walk-in crisis counseling through the County's Crisis Center; information and referral services; and individual and group counseling and support groups for surviving family and friends of homicide victims.

Fees for ongoing counseling services are based on a sliding fee scale, and no one is denied services due to lack of funds.

For more information about VASAP services, call 240-777-1355 (TTY 240-777-1347). The 24-hour crisis line is 240-777-4357.

County Council Public Hearings Calendar

Budget, Supplemental Appropriations Considered

DATE	TIME	MATTERS UNDER CONSIDERATION
May 1	1:30 p.m.	- Resolution to amend FY08 Transportation Fees, Charges, and Fares - Resolution to set amount of Property Tax Credit for Income Tax Offset
	1:30 p.m.	Supplemental Appropriation to the County Government's FY2007 Operating Budget, DPWT: - \$150,000 for Project Civic Access - \$973,440 for Division of Transit Services
	1:30 p.m.	Special Appropriation to the MCPS FY2007 Capital Budget: - \$3,572,000 for Relocatable Classrooms
	1:30 p.m.	Supplemental Appropriation to the County's FY07 Operating Budget: - \$700,000 for Art Gallery Renovation
	7:00 p.m.	MCPS FY08 Capital Budget and FY07-12 CIP Amendments
May 8	1:30 p.m.	Special Appropriation to the MCPS FY2007 Capital Budget and Amendment to the FY2007-2012 CIP: - \$1,200,000 for Stormwater Management
	1:30 p.m.	Supplemental Appropriation to the County Government's FY2007 Operating Budget: - Rockville Parking District, NDA (\$227,880) and DPWT (\$20,000) for Rockville and Bethesda Libraries Parking
June 12	1:30 p.m.	ZTA 07-04 , Accessory Structure, Standards
	1:30 p.m.	Bill 7-07 , Tenant Displacement-Sale of Rental Housing-Right of First Refusal

Vox Pops**Voices From Around the Upcounty Community**

A Note from Mike: I receive countless phone calls, e-mails, and letters each day. Most are passionate, many are frustrated, and a few are downright funny . . . but all of them are thoughtful and well-intended. I think readers of The Open Mike will be interested to hear what their Upcounty neighbors have to say, whether they're across the street or across the county. With that in mind, the "Vox Pops" section of my newsletter features highlights from some of the correspondence and phone calls I've received in my office over the past month.

Reader Wants A New Senior Center in the Upcounty

"The upcounty area is in dire need of a new Upcounty Senior Center. The present center, a converted Quality Inn, is no longer adequate to meet the needs of 900 Upcounty Seniors. The parking situation is becoming a serious problem. Many Seniors park across the street at McDonalds. Many are not happy with the constant busing back and forth and with having to drive to off site places. We definitely need space with everything in one place. It has become a hardship for some seniors who can't drive or just can't afford a car on limited incomes. Most seniors go home after the off site program and do not return to the center. They no longer have social interaction with other seniors who might otherwise benefit from their company. It has become too expensive for Senior drivers to drive back and forth to off site programs. Some have dropped the programs they once attended. This is not giving seniors a quality of life in their senior years. I urge you to look deep into your pockets and try to find some funding for this much needed Senior Center in Gaithersburg, a central location."--*Jeannie*

Trans-Fat Ban May Hurt Even Health-Conscious Chefs

"I am pastry chef and owner of a small chocolate shop in Olney called Penny Chocolates and am writing to you to express my deep concern over the current proposal to prohibit food service establishments in Montgomery County from utilizing any product containing more than 0.5 grams of trans fat per serving. The current proposal to ban all such products by January 1, 2008, is unnecessarily harsh given the lack of affordable alternatives for shortening in the marketplace. While I do not use any artificial trans fats in my products, I know from first hand experience how difficult it can be to find such products.

"While soy is promoted as a healthy alternative to dairy, it actually is one of the top eight food allergens. Under certain conditions, exposure to these products can result in an anaphylactic reaction. I found that I could not be exposed to or touch Crisco, which is soy based, for prolonged periods of time or be in the room when certain cooking sprays were used without having an adverse reaction. After much searching, I found one brand of non-hydrogenated shortening made from palm oil; the product costs twice as much as ordinary shortening. While this new shortening made it possible for me to continue baking, I soon discovered that I could not simply switch types of shortening in a recipe. Through trial and error I was able to make the changes necessary to obtain a satisfactory result.

I share this story with you, in the hopes that you can gain an appreciation for how difficult and expensive it would be for those of us in pastry to comply with a January 1, 2008 deadline. It is one thing to go through multiple iterations of a recipe as a student, it is quite another for a small business to try and absorb the extra labor, electric, gas, water and food costs associated with such an exercise. The restaurant industry is customer driven. If customers demand meals prepared with little or no artificial trans fats, then restaurants will place pressure on food service suppliers to come up with affordable solutions. This takes time. Trying to implement this change in 6-7 months through regulatory fiat will serve only to harm the restaurant industry in Montgomery County."-- *Cheryl*